FRANK MILLER
THE ART OF SIN CITY®

BLAM!!

FRANK MILLER
THE ART OF SIN CITY

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FRANK MILLER: THE ART OF SIN CITY

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WHEN LESS IS MORE, AN ENTIRE CITY

AN INTRODUCTION BY R.C. HARVEY

The medium of the comics is a visual medium. Or so we've often heard. And I've even said it occasionally. To say that comics is a visual medium is to deploy verbal shorthand to make the point that pictures play a dominant role in comics storytelling. And that is true. But it is only a half-truth. Comics use words as well as pictures, and in the best comics, the verbal and the visual blend to create a meaning that neither words nor pictures alone without the other achieve. Despite this seemingly equal yoking, pictures predominate: they identify the medium. In shorthand or longhand, they set comics stories apart from prose narratives. They also enhance the drama inherent in any story by pacing events and focusing attention. No one knows this any better than Frank Miller.

Miller edged over the horizon into national awareness of his work in 1979 when he was assigned to one of Marvel's slow-movers, *Daredevil*, written by Roger McKenzie. It was the era of the relentlessly chatty caption in every title. Miller managed, almost from the start, to prune the language, relying more and more upon pictures to carry the narrative forward and to create tone and drama. After about ten issues, McKenzie was gone, and Miller was in full control of words as well as pictures, fabricating plot as well as mood. It was an extraordinary period in Miller's development as a cartoonist (who, by definition, creates in visual-verbal terms) and in the maturation of the art form. Devouring the work of such comics masters as Harvey Kurtzman and Will Eisner, Miller put what he learned from them to work as soon as he'd learned the lesson. In an electrifying display of virtuosity, he seemed to move immediately, almost instantaneously, from mimicry to mastery: he understood a technique that he observed so thoroughly that he seemed wholly in command of it the first time he employed it. And every device he used, he improved upon. He varied page layouts and panel composition to heighten the drama of events with visual emphasis; he used wordless sequences of nearly static imagery to promote emotional impact; he paced his narrative, dribbling out elements of plot piecemeal, panel by panel for pages, building suspense. He even had pages on which white space was the prevailing image, austerely accenting the strategically arrayed pictures. In Miller's hands, *Daredevil* became a best seller. And so did Frank Miller. From about this time henceforth, he was able to pick and choose his projects with a freedom not often accorded comic book creators. Ultimately, Miller chose crime.

The underworld, cops and robbers (with an emphasis on bad guys and the frailty of human nature in an urban jungle), has been Miller's favored milieu all along. During his apprenticeship on Marvel titles, he tolerated the squads of superheroes in their spangled spandex. But he is enamored of the storytelling possibilities inherent in lawlessness. Understandably, Miller's *Daredevil* had eased pretty soon into a seedy Hell's Kitchen of petty crooks and criminal degenerates, the portrait of life on the edge of the law tinged with shadowy refuse-choked alleyways and the litter on saloon floors sticky with spilled booze and pockmarked by stubbed-out cigarette butts. In Miller's epochal *Dark Knight* series for DC Comics in 1986, the iconic Batman moved into the same neighborhood, and when he came out, he was psychically scarred, perhaps forever. This leader of the longjohn legions had been so corrupted by his encounter with gritty criminality that he would never again be the same as he was before. And

neither, so persuasive is Miller's influence, would many of Batman's cohorts in crime-fighting, all of whom, in one way or another, seemed to sip a little from the same bitter brew that had turned the Caped Crusader sour. And then Miller found Sin City.

Here, at Dark Horse, Miller invented a demi-monde perfectly suited for the sort of sordid tales he wanted to tell. Beginning with the brute force named Marvin, all the so-called good guys are bad guys, redeemed but briefly by a momentary, scarcely understood impulse that might pass for goodness, save for its motive, vengeance. These are uncompromising barbarians, ruthless outlaws, whose inarticulate sufferings and single-minded motivations and deeply, deeply frustrated yearnings for human affection in any form are all that make them humanly recognizable for most of us who read about them. Most of us, like all of them, are inarticulate and single-minded and somewhat frustrated in our longing to be loved in a world that seems inexplicably impersonal and uncaring. We are not, it seems, so very different.

Fascinated as Miller seems to be by this milieu (ours as well as his, after all), he is even more enthralled by the visual means he has adopted to reveal Sin City and its denizens. From the first of his professional career, he has struggled against the fetters of "house style" rendering. As *Daredevil* became, issue by issue, a better selling book, it would appear that Miller gained greater and greater freedom to follow his muse in both storyline and visual style. The license he was granted is most evident, in this title, in page design and pacing. But when he produced a six-issue series for DC in 1983-'84 called *Ronin*, Miller cast aside all preconceptions about artistic style, breaking rules on nearly every page. His breakdowns and page layouts were startling departures — page-wide horizontal panels, page-deep vertical panels, double-page spread panels; pages with one panel, pages with dozens of panels. Inking his own pencils, he used a simple, delicate line, sometimes texturing the pictures with hachuring, sometimes leaving them in spare outline. Visual styling changed subtly from scene to scene to suit the mood of the sequence being rendered. The experience of producing *Ronin*, Miller later said, was the most liberating of his professional life. And then came *Sin City*. Here, again, Miller adopts a drawing style appropriate to the world he pictures.

And this may be as good a place as any, standing here on the threshold of a book of *Sin City* imagery, to remember how we started out — by saying that the medium of comics is a visual medium. Moreover — and more to my present point — comics is the natural habitat of cartoonists, those who, as I vouchsafed earlier, create in terms both visual and verbal, simultaneously invoked, seamlesslyyoked. Regardless of the habitual visual-verbal blending in the act of conjuring up stories to tell, cartoonists are essentially visual, not verbal, artists. They draw. And they love to draw. No one becomes a cartoonist who does not love drawing. That's first. The stories are excuses that permit the cartoonist to draw. And this is a book of drawings, a celebration of drawing by a cartoonist who loves to draw.

Some of the drawings, ripped untimely from their narrative context, retain hints of their storytelling function. Others do not. All, however, speak wordlessly of the world Miller devised the style to depict. Black dominates the imagery. The black of drenching shadow, of a darkness so dense it can be pierced by only the tiniest slivers of light, a darkness that so completely cloaks the evil deeds being done in it that they could, except for Miller, have gone forever unobserved, unreported. Unpunished. Here, style creates the world in which Miller's misfits and malcontents shuffle and lurk and grind their teeth in suppressed rage, and women brazenly flaunt their bodies.

In devising this dark and brooding style for *Sin City*, Miller is clearly having some fun, playing a cartoonist

game. The game has only one rule: in picture after picture, Miller seems to be challenging himself to see how much he can leave out of the visual and still maintain a narrative function. As examples of graphic artistry, his stories are cunningly orchestrated omission. Miller is simplifying. Or maybe the word is "purifying." He's purifying narrative pictures, distilling from them only the essential storytelling imagery. It's as if he's trying to see how much narrative meaning can be hinted at rather than delineated. This is a maneuver peculiar, I dare say, to comics. It cannot be performed in other media as effectively. The cartoonist is somewhat like the filmmaker. Both think, create, in visual terms (in tandem with sound and/or verbal content, admittedly, but fundamentally visual), but the filmmaker's visuals are in continuous motion; the cartoonist's visuals are static, punctuation marks that identify key moments in an ongoing action or unfolding story. Because the cartoonist's pictures are motionless, they remain before the viewer's gaze indefinitely. They can be studied, examined for meaning and implication. The viewer can expand upon the visual hints in the pictures, filling in the blanks, so to speak, with a scene only hinted at in such pictures as Miller has produced for much of the *Sin City* series.

This volume supplies the most vivid demonstration yet of the art of leaving things out. Among the pages of finished drawings herein are a few of the preliminary sketches, and by comparing the sketch to the final work, we can see the extremity to which Miller has taken the stratagem. The girl disrobing from *Hell and Back* #6 (page 47), for instance. Almost nothing of the preliminary linework is left; form and shape are indicated by highlighting and contrasting. And, again, in the tip-in art for the limited edition hardcover of *Family Values* (page 87), a riveting Oriental refinement has emerged from the preliminary drawing. Stunning as these images are, the practice is equally effective in a more narrative mode, as, for example, the scene from *A Dame to Kill For* #4 (page 31) in which the girls from Old Town pour lead into the cop car. Deployment of solid black permits Miller to leave out all but the most telling details: no background, no curbstone or street trash, the scene is set by the tile on the rooftop and the angle of the composition, and the action is depicted with the simplest glyphs for the actors.

Miller's technique, while seemingly simple, became quite complex in successive *Sin City* books. At first, he worked mostly in bold, solid shapes of which the framing doorway scene from *Silent Night* (page 20) and Marvin contemplating the dawn (page 27) or in the brothel asking for handcuffs (page 55) or the protagonist in the alley from *The Big Fat Kill* (page 26) are fair examples. The operative principle seems to be to shroud everything in deep shadow. The prevailing image is solid black, and figures and shapes are defined by highlights that are created by a single light source in an otherwise completely darkened setting. Marvin breaking into a run (page 11) and, later, in the electric chair (page 28) are typical. And again, in a startling example from *A Dame To Kill For* #5 (page 42), the lovers' bodies are shaped almost entirely by the shadows thrown from the light coming through the window.

In the first variation on the shadowy ploy, Miller merely reverses the palette: suddenly, the dominant image is starkly, screamingly white, and figures and shapes are delineated by flecks of black shadow. The most dramatic example at hand of this approach is the scene in the snow outside the mansion from "Daddy's Little Girl" (page 72), particularly the bottom half-page panel in which every semblance of line has been sleeted out, leaving only icy hints of form as supplied by blocks of solid black. This page is from Miller's later period, but the impulse to define by shadow as well as by highlights is apparent in the earliest work, say the picture of Marvin climbing the brick wall from *Dark Horse Presents* #52 (page 12).

The next development in the evolution of this style saw Miller discard the mechanical device of a light source and work purely in contrasting black-and-white. The naked, gun-brandishing babe from the *Sin City Collector Cards* (page 35) is, so to speak, a revealing instance. The light source, at first blush, seems to be at the upper left, splashing light on the right side of the woman's face and breasts and torso. But if the light comes from the upper left, how can her left shoulder and arm be highlighted? They would be in the shadow of her head, at least. And the back of her left thigh would scarcely be lighted from that angle. No, by this time, Miller is defining shapes through the sheer contrast of black-and-white; the light source device, so brilliantly employed, say, with the lovers in *A Dame to Kill For* (page 42), is no longer a controlling tactic. Contrast alone shapes the images — dazzlingly! — of Nancy dancing in her cowgirl outfit in *That Yellow Bastard* (page 95) and of the naked Ava in *The Big Fat Kill* (page 85). And in such circumstances as the operating room sequence in *That Yellow Bastard* #2 (page 52), we see the gambit taken to its logical extreme: here, black becomes, in effect, a "color," arrayed against solid white and augmented by fragile linework.

Line has figured in every stage in the evolution of this style. At first, Miller seems determined to avoid line altogether, but he soon begins to use it as a decorative motif to create the visual relief of texture amid the solid blacks and whites. It is first most evident in the rendering of Marvin's furrowed visage, but linear treatment appears elsewhere, too — as a column of smoke, say, from a smoldering cigarette or as the nap of a knitted sweater or as ringlets in a woman's hair. In the promotional drawing of the protagonist and three babes (page 57) for *The Big Fat Kill*, for instance, we have a cascade of differing textures against the usual contrasting solid blacks and whites.

The contrastive character of his treatment quickly led Miller to devise patterns, too, as well as textures for visual variety: the tile roof in *Sin City*'s episode 13 (page 63), for example, or the linear pattern created by light through the blinds in *A Dame To Kill For* #2 (page 37). And patterns become chaotic in rendering the layered atmosphere in the smoke-filled dens of Old Town iniquity or in the pelting rainstorm that concludes *The Big Fat Kill*. The impulse for texture eventually leads Miller to splattering a fine spray of white ink across solid black to soften the visual impact of the otherwise unrelieved darkness, as in the treatment of the pinup on the back cover of *Hell and Back* #6 (page 77).

And then came color. At first, it was the occasional splash of crimson that accented the black-and-white in "The Babe Wore Red" and then a corrosive yellow in *That Yellow Bastard* and, finally, the tonal variations created by Lynn Varley that subtly modulate or enhance the impact of the black-and-white drawings.

While some of Miller's technique evolved through a succession of *Sin City* books, the progression was undoubtedly not as incremental or logical (or, even, as deliberate and conscious) as I've made it seem in this discussion. Delineation by contrast alone was always implicit in the chiaroscuro of his initial foray into light and shadow. And the visual variety that could be achieved with a filigree of fine linework was inherent in the first books; over the ensuing decade, Miller simply elaborated upon his initial impulse, consciously recognizing, no doubt, by the end of the period, what he instinctively knew at the beginning. The evolution of an artist's sensibility and methods is never an entirely orderly matter. And it never ends. But some of the more recent stages in Miller's growth and development as an artist are displayed within, punctuation marks in a steadily evolving talent. You should now turn the page and savor the visual delights at the right, contemplate this stylistic tour de force that conjures up the world in which the cartoonist tells his tales and that becomes, thereby, part of the narrative itself — as it ever must in a visual medium in which drawings are the very essence.

"HEROES DON'T GO WEAK IN THE KNEES AND FEEL LIKE THROWING UP OR CURLING UP INTO A LITTLE BALL AND CRYING LIKE A BABY."

HI.

Previous page. *Hell and Back* #9, page 44, 2000

Above: Promotional art for *Hero Illustrated* #18, 1995

IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE I BREAK INTO A RUN. I CAN'T HELP MYSELF.
NO SHAKING, NOW. NO COLD SWEAT NO DOUBTS. THE FEAR GOT OUT FOR A LITTLE WHILE THERE BUT NOW IT'S CRAWLED BACK IN, FAR AWAY, A SMALL COLD THING LOST IN A BELLY THAT'S FULL OF FIRE.
EVEN THE WOODS DON'T SCARE ME ANYMORE BECAUSE I'M JUST ONE MORE PREDATOR AND I'M BIGGER AND MEANER THAN THE REST
ALL I'VE EVER BEEN GOOD AT IS KILLING SO I MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY IT.

Sin City trade paperback, page 164, 1993

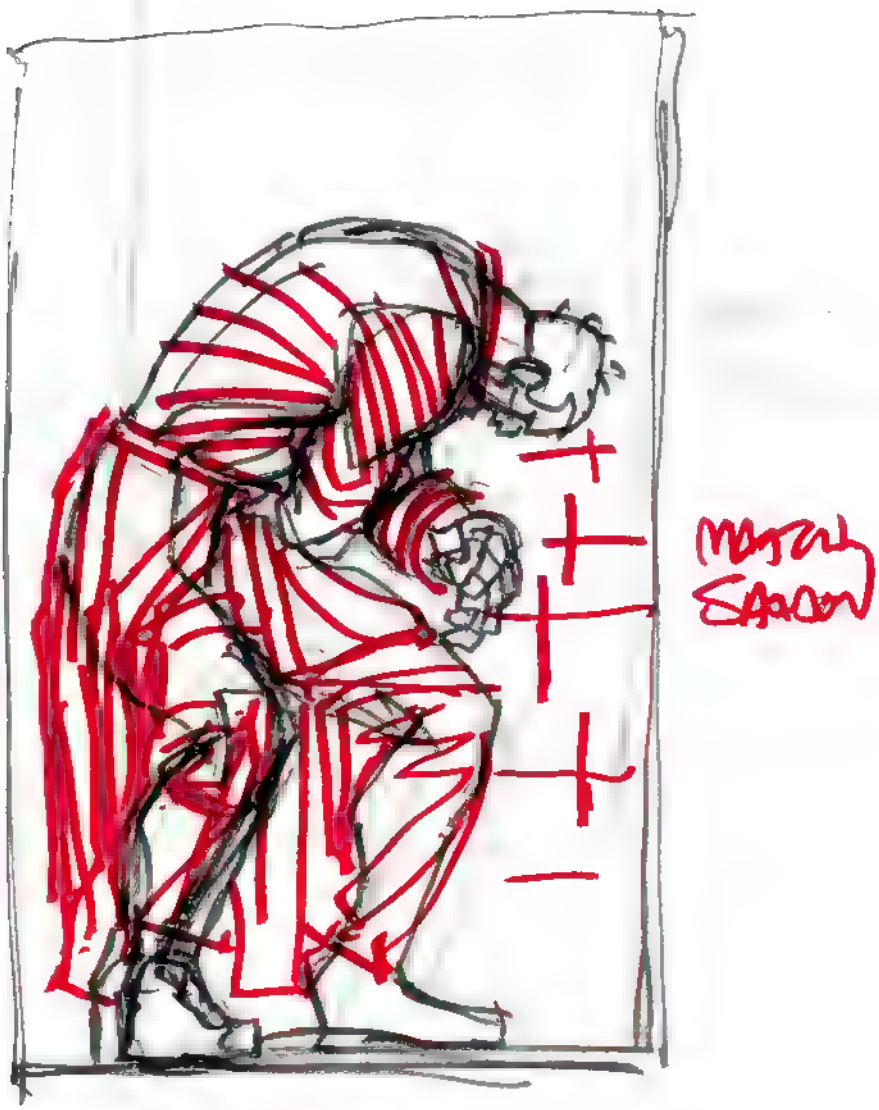
Above: *Sin City*, episode three, page 6, *Dark Horse Presents* #52, 1991

Opposite page: *A Dame To Kill For* #1, front cover, 1993

FM

"Rats," page 6, *Lost, Lonely, & Lethal*, 1996

Silent Night, page 11, 1995



Opposite page *That Yellow Bastard* #1 page 11, 1996

NO. NO. NOT A HEART ATTACK. NO. NOT NOW.

Sin City Collector Cards #15, 1999

ROARR!
DAMN IT!
EVERY INCH OF ME WANTS TO TURN TAIL TO SNEAK INTO THE BACK OF A TRUCK OR HOP A FREIGHT CAR AND HAUL OUT OF TOWN. I WANT TO RUN, RUN LIKE HELL, TO CRAWL INTO A CAVE SOMEWHERE AND FORGET ABOUT GOLDIE AND LUCILLE AND SILENT, DEADLY KEVIN.
ROARR. DAMN IT.
I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD.
I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD.
AND IT'S NOT THAT I'M ANY KIND OF HERO THAT MAKES ME STAY. HEROES DON'T GO WEAK IN THE KNEES AND FEEL LIKE THROWING UP OR CURLING UP INTO A LITTLE BALL AND CRYING LIKE A BABY.

Sin City, episode eleven, page 3, *Dark Horse Presents* #60, 1992

Silent Night, page 21, 1995

Sin City 10th Anniversary Edition limited edition print, 2001

Preliminary pencils, *Sin City*, episode two, page 3, *Dark Horse Presents* #51, 1991

Sin City Collector Cards #L3, 1999

Detail from *Hell and Back* #8, page 24. 2000

Above: *Silent Night*, page 3, 1995

Following page: *The Big Fat Kill* #5, page 25, 1995

I'M OUTNUMBERED.
OUTGUNNED.

BUT THE ALLEY IS *CROOKED*.
DARK. AND VERY, VERY *NARROW*.

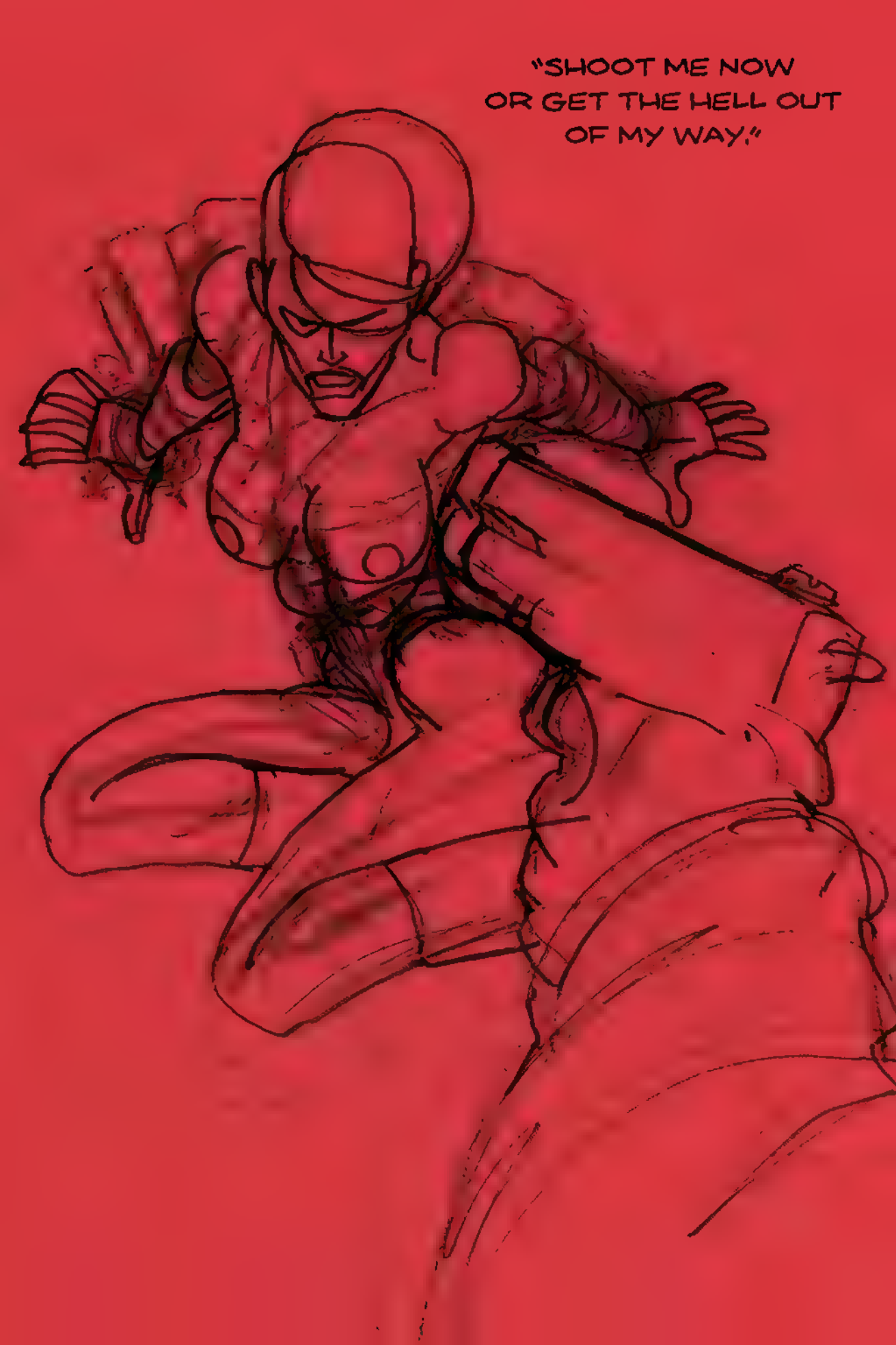
FUNNELED INTO IT, THEY GET IN
EACH OTHER'S *WAY*. THEY CAN'T
SURROUND ME. THEIR NUMBERS
DON'T *COUNT* FOR SO MUCH.

SOMETIMES YOU CAN BEAT THE
ODDS--WITH A *CAREFUL* CHOICE
OF *WHERE TO FIGHT*.

Above: *Sin City* trade paperback, page 66, 1993

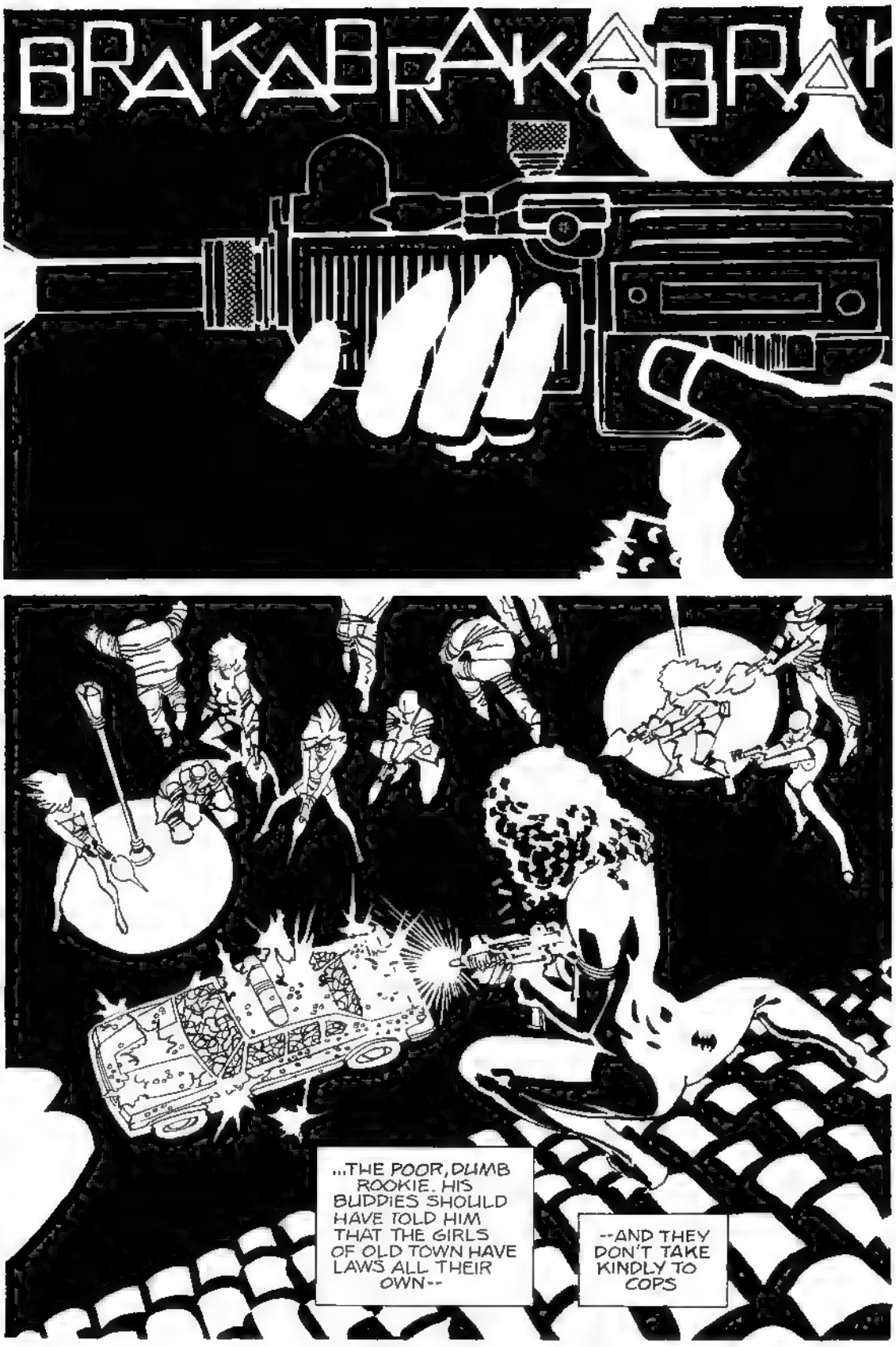
Following page: *Sin City* episode thirteen, front cover, *Dark Horse Presents* #62, 1992

FM
'92


"SHOOT ME NOW
OR GET THE HELL OUT
OF MY WAY."

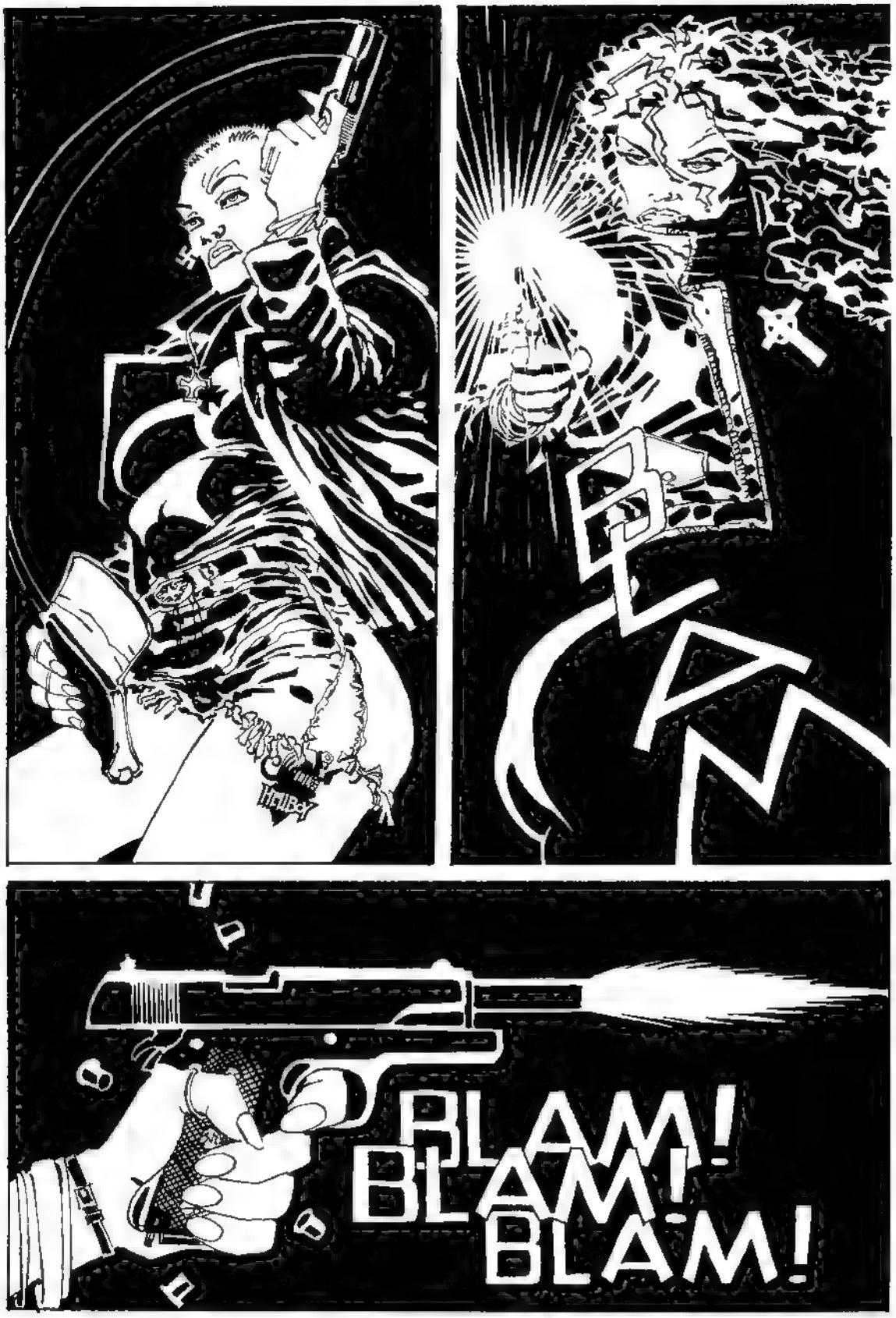
The Big Fat Kill #1, page 20, 1994

Sin City Collector Cards #68, 1999


BRAKABRAKABRA
...THE POOR, DUMB ROOKIE. HIS BUDDIES SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM THAT THE GIRLS OF OLD TOWN HAVE LAWS ALL THEIR OWN--
--AND THEY DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO COPS

A Dame To Kill For #4, page 22, 1994

Family Values, page 121, 1997



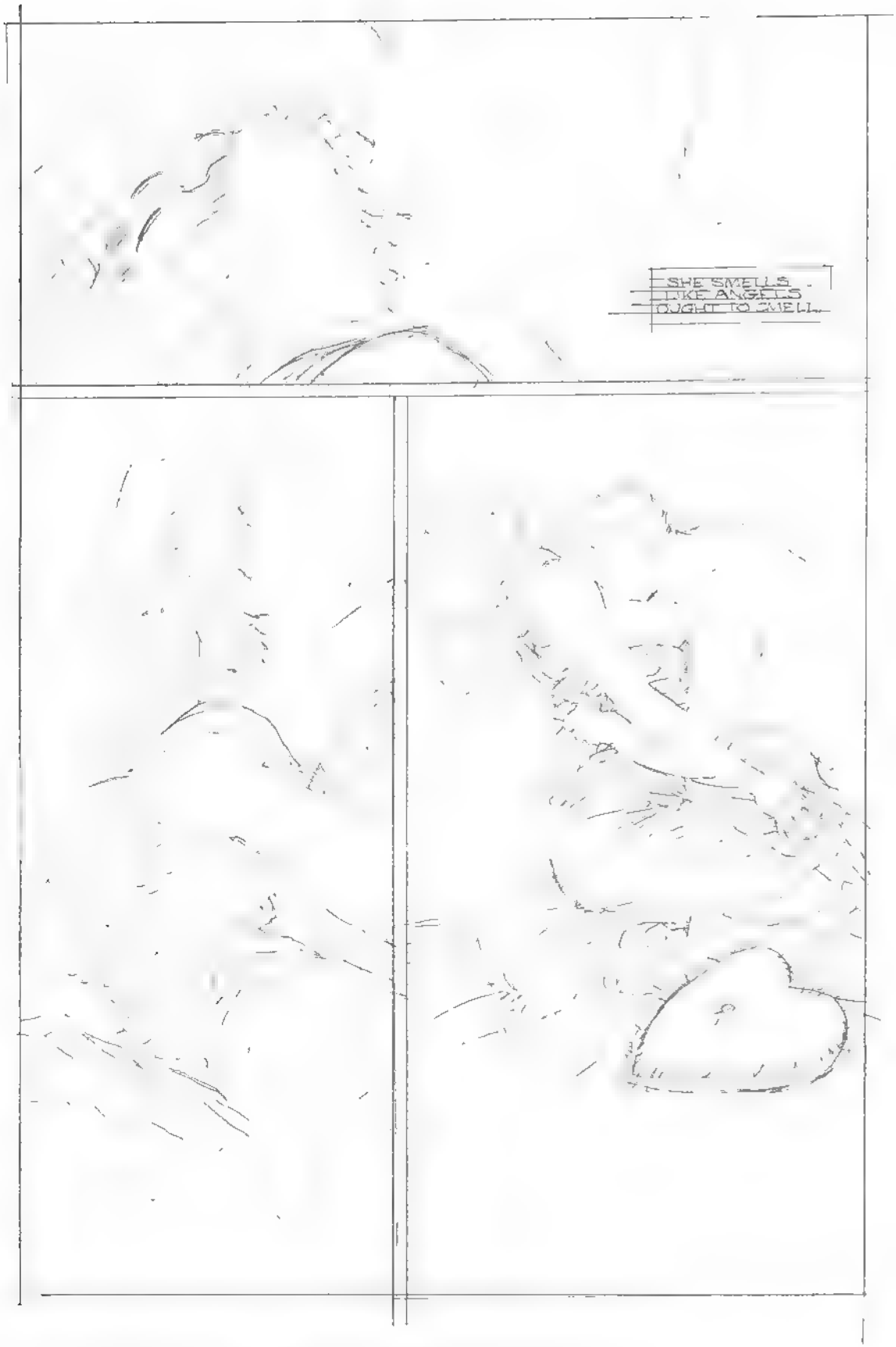
A Dame To Kill For #4, page 21, 1994

Above: *Sin City Collector Cards* #66, 1999

Following page: *That Yellow Bastard* #1, back cover, 1996

"I'M YOURS.
NOW. TONIGHT."

A Dame To Kill For #2, page 23, 1994



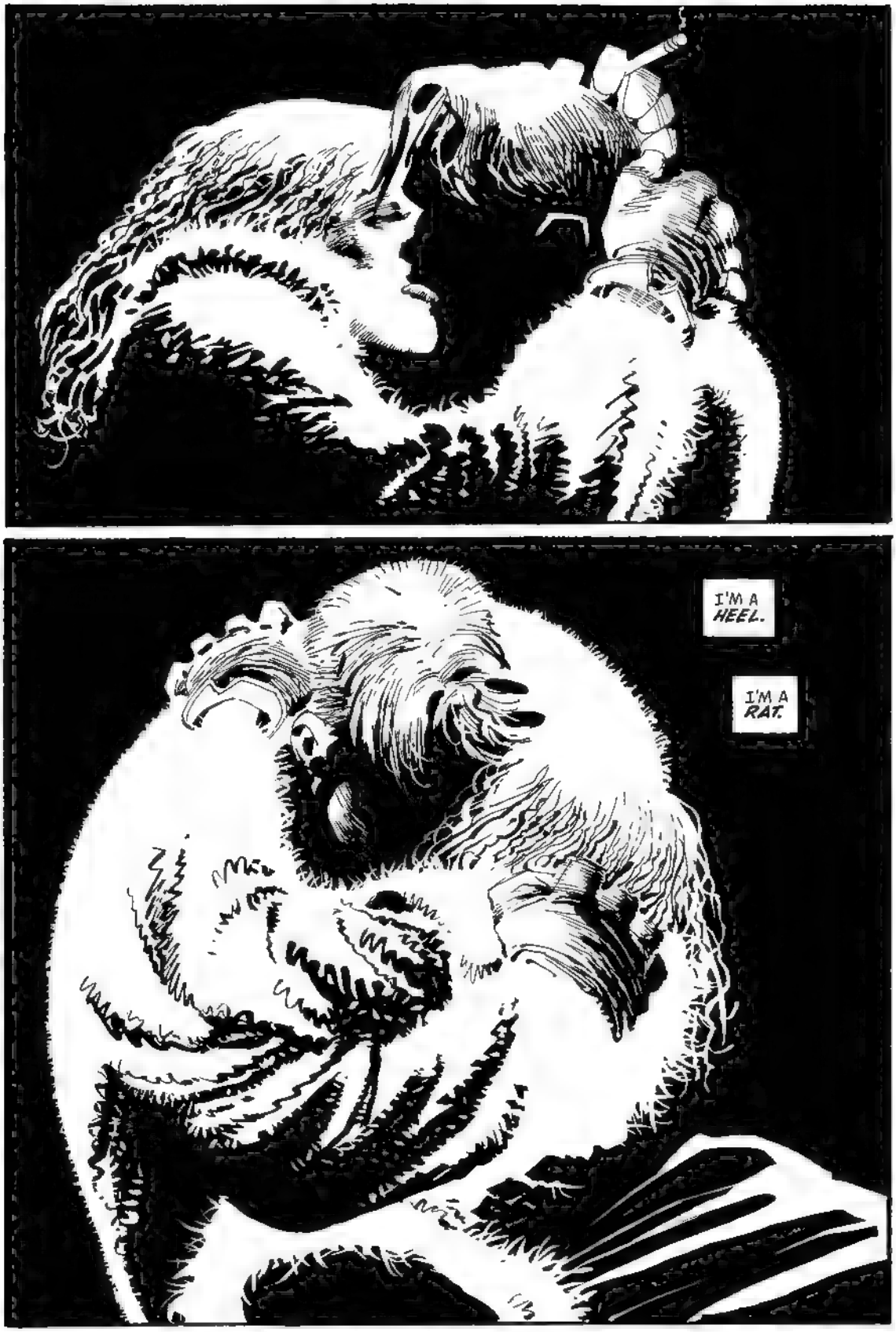
Preliminary pencils, *Sin City*, episode one, page 3, *Dark Horse Presents Fifth Anniversary Special*, 1991

Detail from "The Babe Wore Red," page 18, *The Babe Wore Red and Other Stories*, 1994

Previous page: *That Yellow Bastard* #5, page 12, 1996

Above: *A Dame To Kill For* #5, page 16, 1994

Hell and Back #4, page 16, 1999

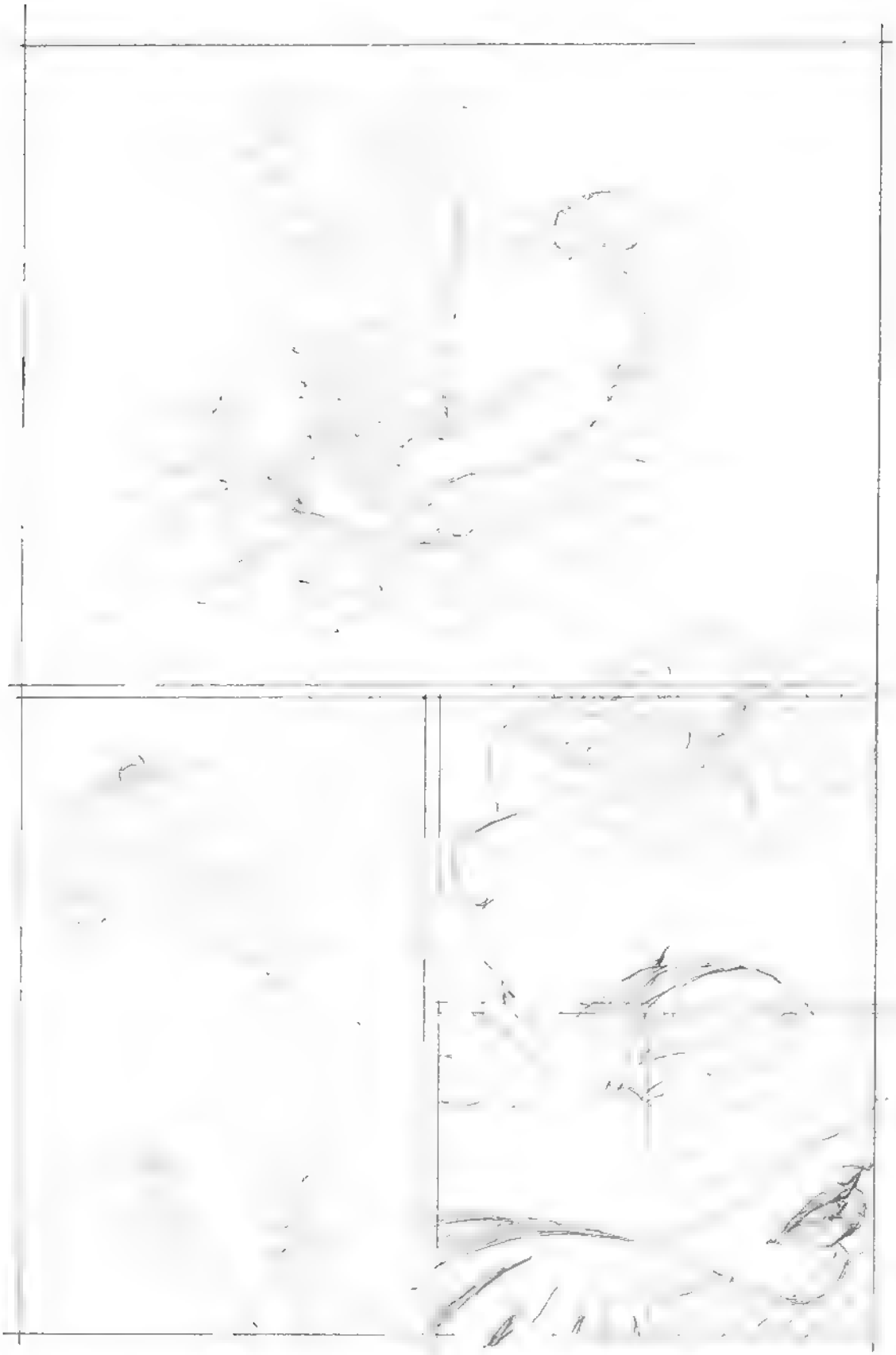


Family Values, page 21, 1997

WE SOB AND SNIVEL AND BAWL OUT LOUD LIKE A COUPLE OF SNOT-NOSED KIDS.
WE MELT TOGETHER.
THE SHUDDER RUNS THROUGH BOTH OF US AS I SCREAM HER NAME
AVA.
AVA!

Above: *A Dame To Kill For* #2, page 22, 1994

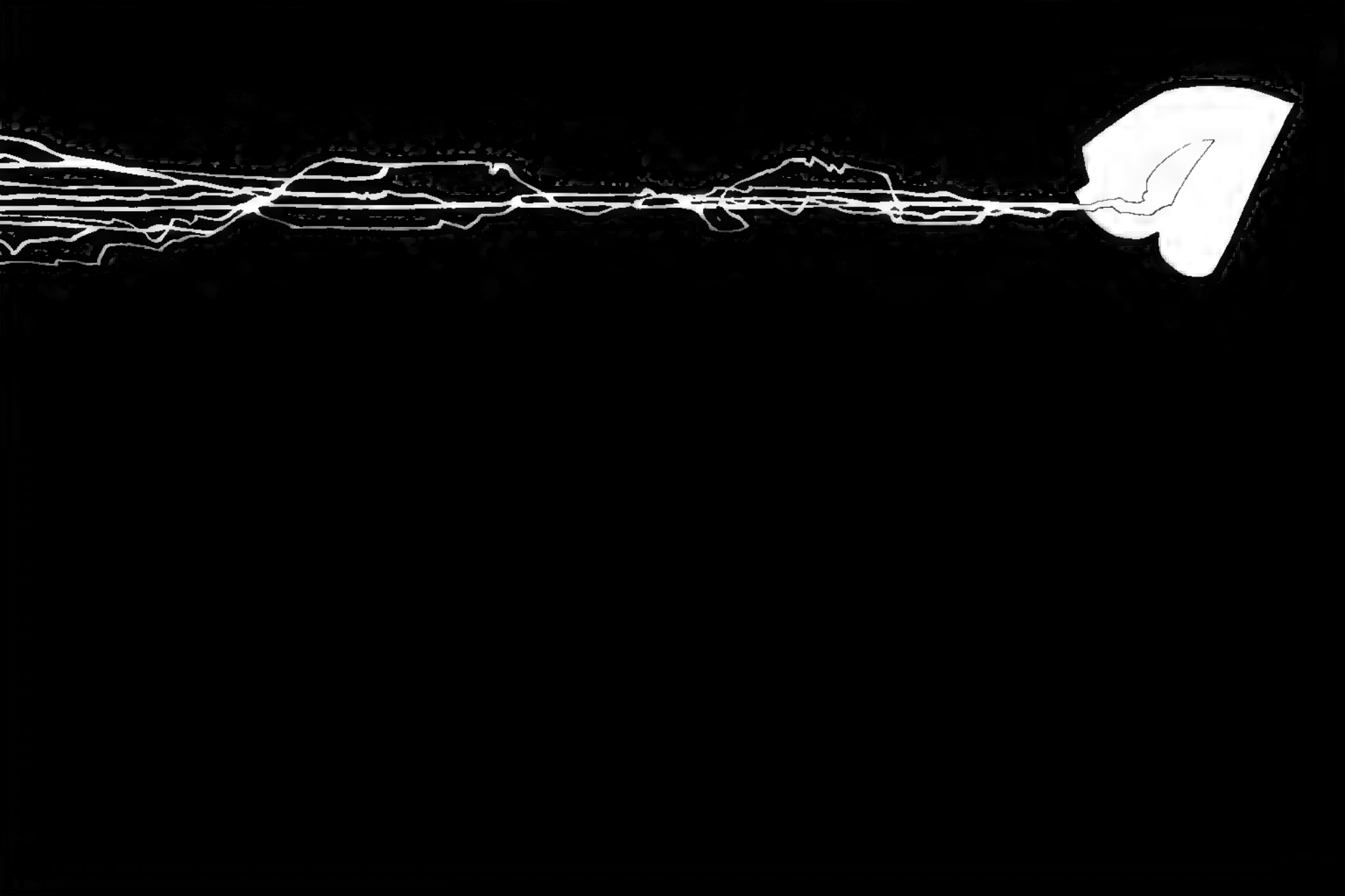
Following right page: *Hell and Back* #6, page 14, 1999



Preliminary pencils, *Sin City*, episode one, page 4, *Dark Horse Presents Fifth Anniversary Special*, 1991

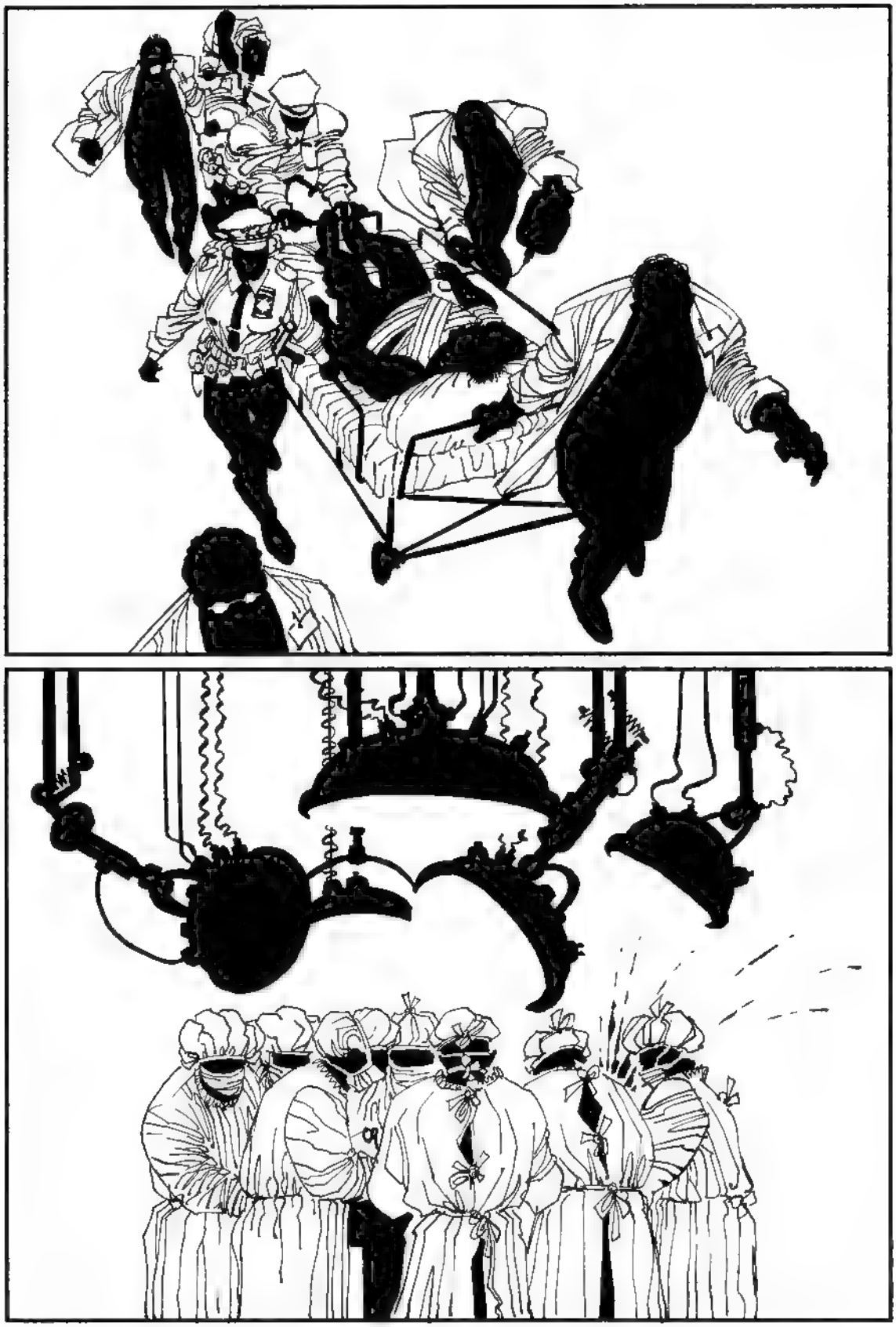
Above: *Family Values*, page 39, 1997

Following page: *Lost, Lonely, & Lethal*, front cover, 1996



"WALK DOWN THE RIGHT BACK ALLEY IN SIN CITY AND YOU CAN FIND ANYTHING."
TOK
TOK

Preliminary pencils, *Sin City*, episode one, page 1, *Dark Horse Presents Fifth Anniversary Special*, 1991



That Yellow Bastard #2, page 15, 1996

A Dame To Kill For #4, page 30, 1994

Sin City, episode nine, page 2, *Dark Horse Presents* #58, 1992

Above *Sin City*, episode thirteen, page 3, *Dark Horse Presents* #62, 1992

Following page *Family Values*, page 69, 1997

SHHH

Above: *The Big Fat Kill* promotional art, 1994

Following spread: *The Big Fat Kill* #5, pages 36-37, 1995

THE THUNDER DOESN'T STOP. WE FIRE AND RELOAD AND FIRE AND RELOAD AND FIRE AND WATCH THEIR HEADS EXPLODE AND THEIR GUTS FLY LIKE BUTCHER'S SCRAPS AND THE ALLEY WALLS GET CAKED WITH WET WADS OF SKIN AND MEAT AND THE SMOKE GETS SO THICK THAT THE THINGS WE'RE PUMPING BULLETS INTO ARE NOTHING BUT TWISTED TOPPLING SCREAMING SMUDGES OF MOVEMENT.

THE VALKYRIE AT MY SIDE IS SHOUTING AND LAUGHING WITH THE PURE HATEFUL BLOODTHIRSTY JOY OF THE SLAUGHTER AND SO AM I.

THE END

Above: *Free Speeches*, front cover, 1998

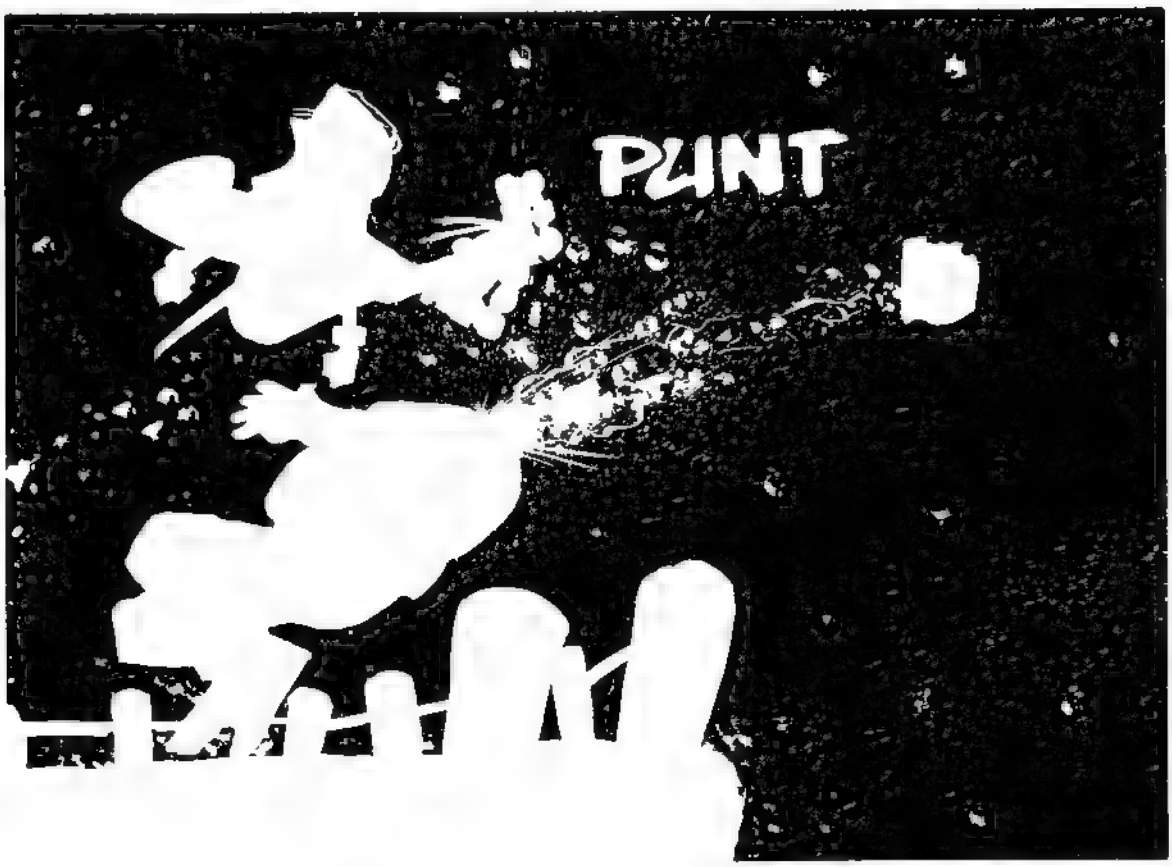
Opposite page: *Family Values*, page 41, 1997

DAMN STRAIGHT YOU WOULDN'T! NONE OF YOU WOULD BUT GOLDIE, AND SHE ONLY DID BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT I COULD PROTECT HER. BUT I GOT TOO DRUNK SO I COULDN'T
AND I'LL BET THE COPS DIDN'T DO A DAMN THING ABOUT THOSE OTHER GIRLS, DID THEY? DAMN STRAIGHT THEY DIDN'T! BUT AS SOON AS THEY HAD ME FOR A FALL GUY THEY SHOWED UP GUNS BLAZING!
BUT THEY DIDN'T GET ME AND I BEEN KILLING MY WAY TO THE TRUTH EVER SINCE AND I'M GETTING DAMN CLOSE TO IT SO GO AHEAD, DOLL SHOOT ME NOW OR GET THE HELL OUT OF MY WAY
OH, NUTS.

Sin City, episode twelve, page 7, *Dark Horse Presents* #61, 1992

Sin City, episode thirteen, page 35, *Dark Horse Presents* #62, 1992

HRNH?


PUNT

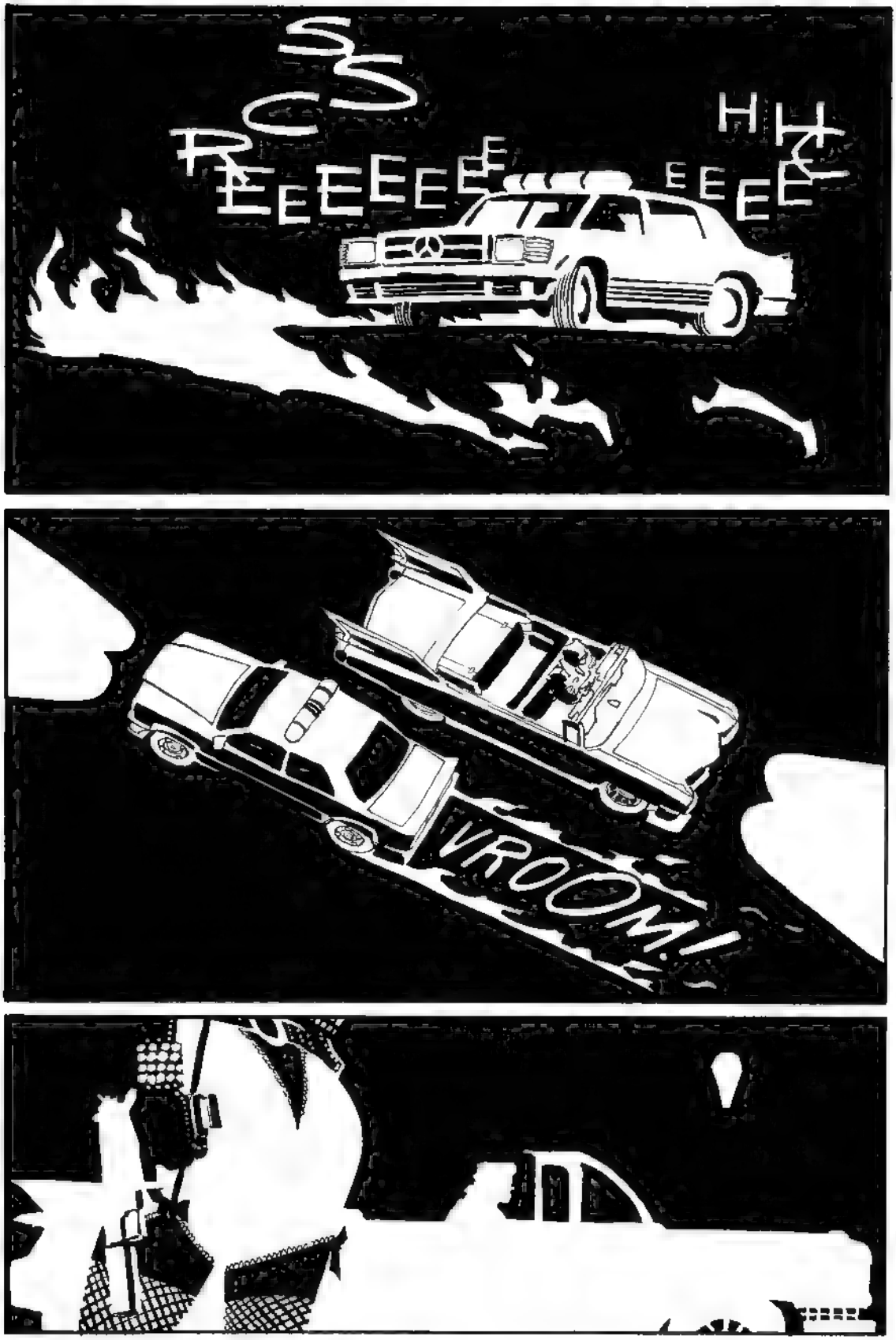
Opposite page *Family Values*, page 84, 1997

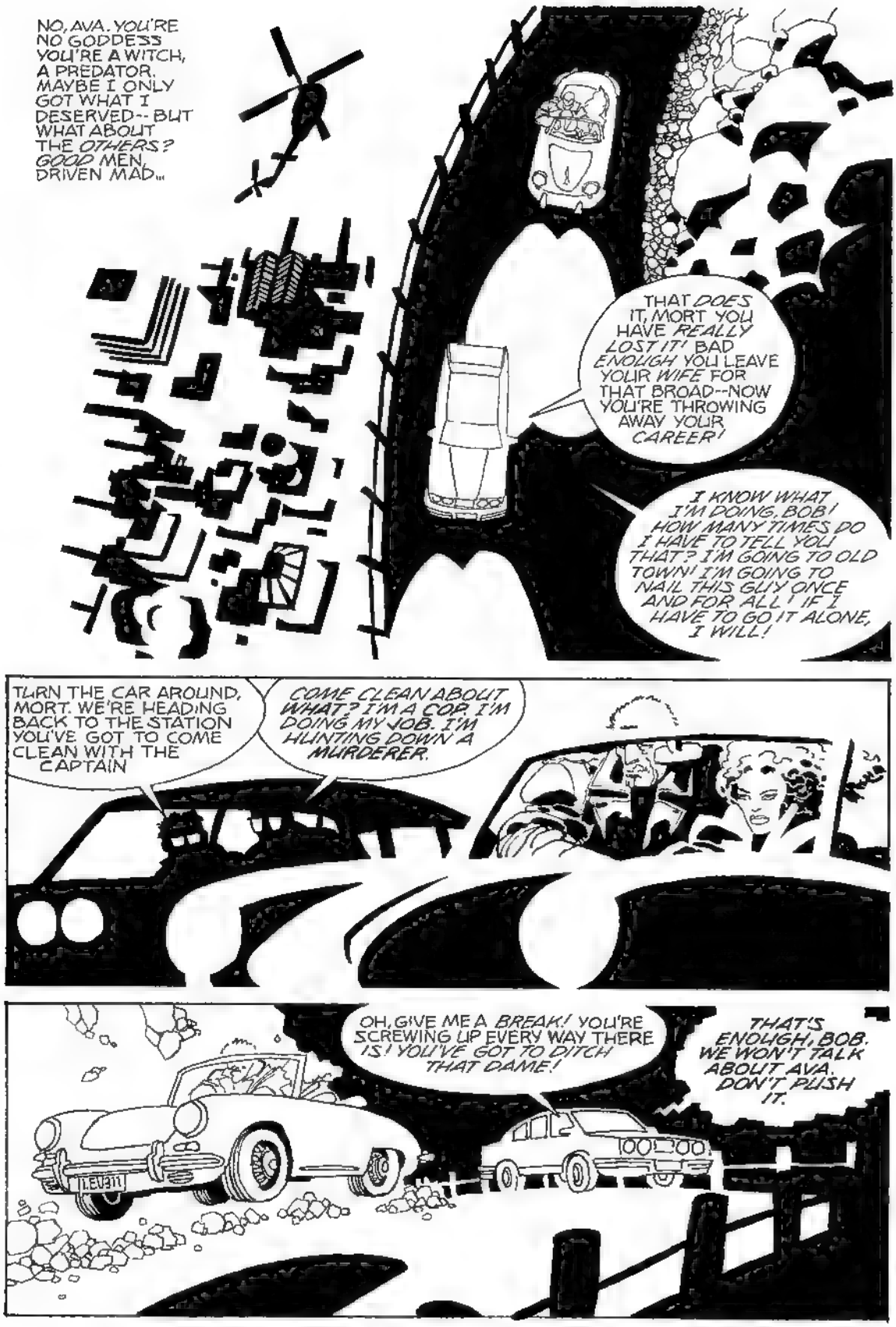
Above *Sin City*, episode eight, page 10, *Dark Horse Presents* #57, 1991

A Dame To Kill For #5, page 26, 1994

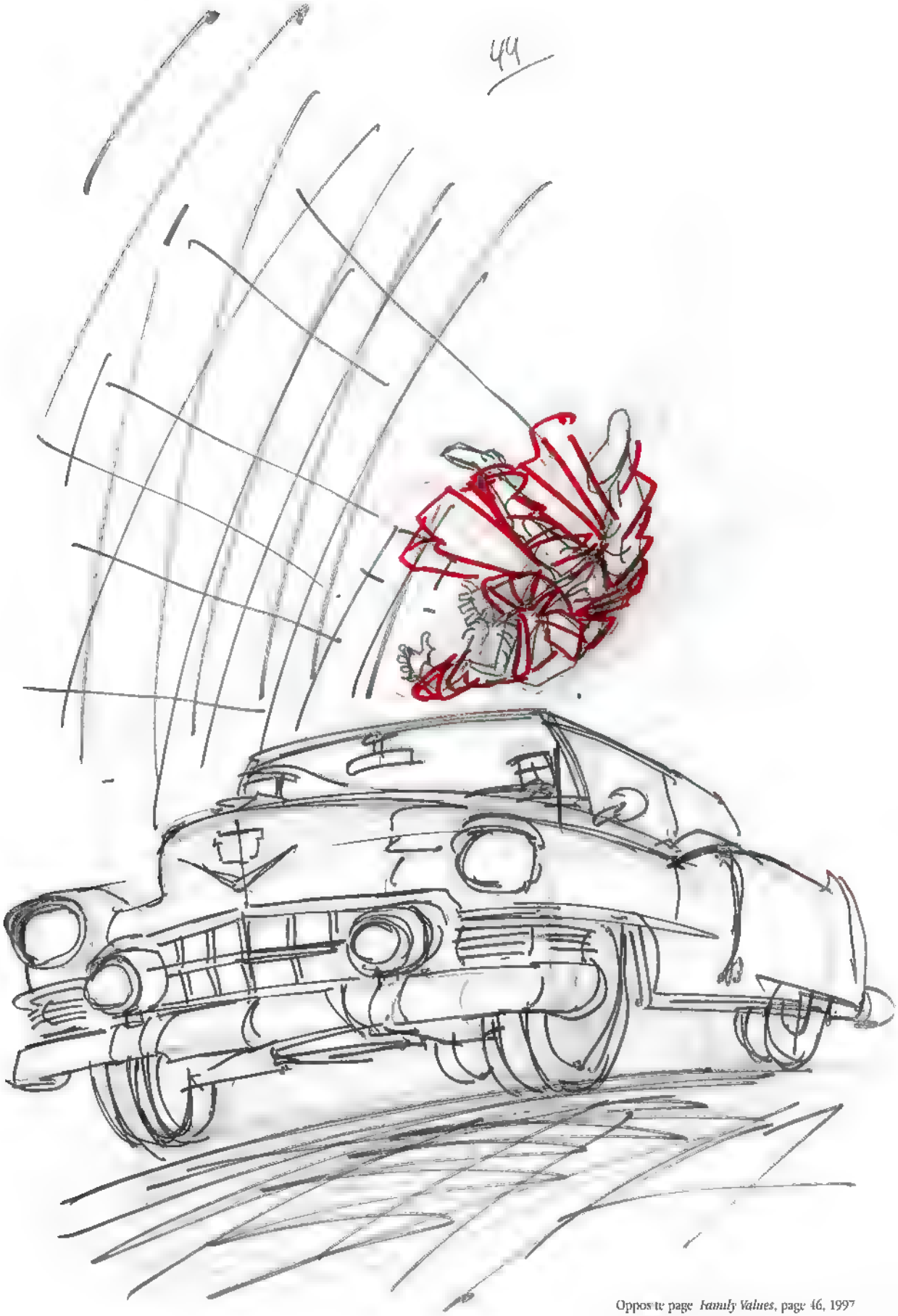
"CARE FOR A RIDE?"

GORDO PUSH CAR.


SCREEEE


NO, AVA. YOU'RE NO GODDESS YOU'RE A WITCH, A PREDATOR. MAYBE I ONLY GOT WHAT I DESERVED-- BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *OTHERS*? *GOOD* MEN, DRIVEN MAD...
THAT *DOES* IT, MORT YOU HAVE *REALLY* LOST IT! BAD *ENOUGH* YOU LEAVE YOUR *WIFE* FOR THAT BROAD--NOW YOU'RE THROWING AWAY YOUR *CAREER!*
I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, BOB! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT? I'M GOING TO OLD TOWN! I'M GOING TO NAIL THIS GUY ONCE AND FOR ALL! IF I HAVE TO GO IT ALONE, I WILL!
TURN THE CAR AROUND, MORT. WE'RE HEADING BACK TO THE STATION YOU'VE GOT TO COME CLEAN WITH THE CAPTAIN
COME CLEAN ABOUT *WHAT*? I'M A COP. I'M DOING MY JOB. I'M HUNTING DOWN A *MURDERER.*
OH, GIVE ME A *BREAK!* YOU'RE SCREWING UP EVERY WAY THERE IS! YOU'VE GOT TO DITCH THAT DAME!
THAT'S ENOUGH, BOB. WE WON'T TALK ABOUT AVA. DON'T PUSH IT.

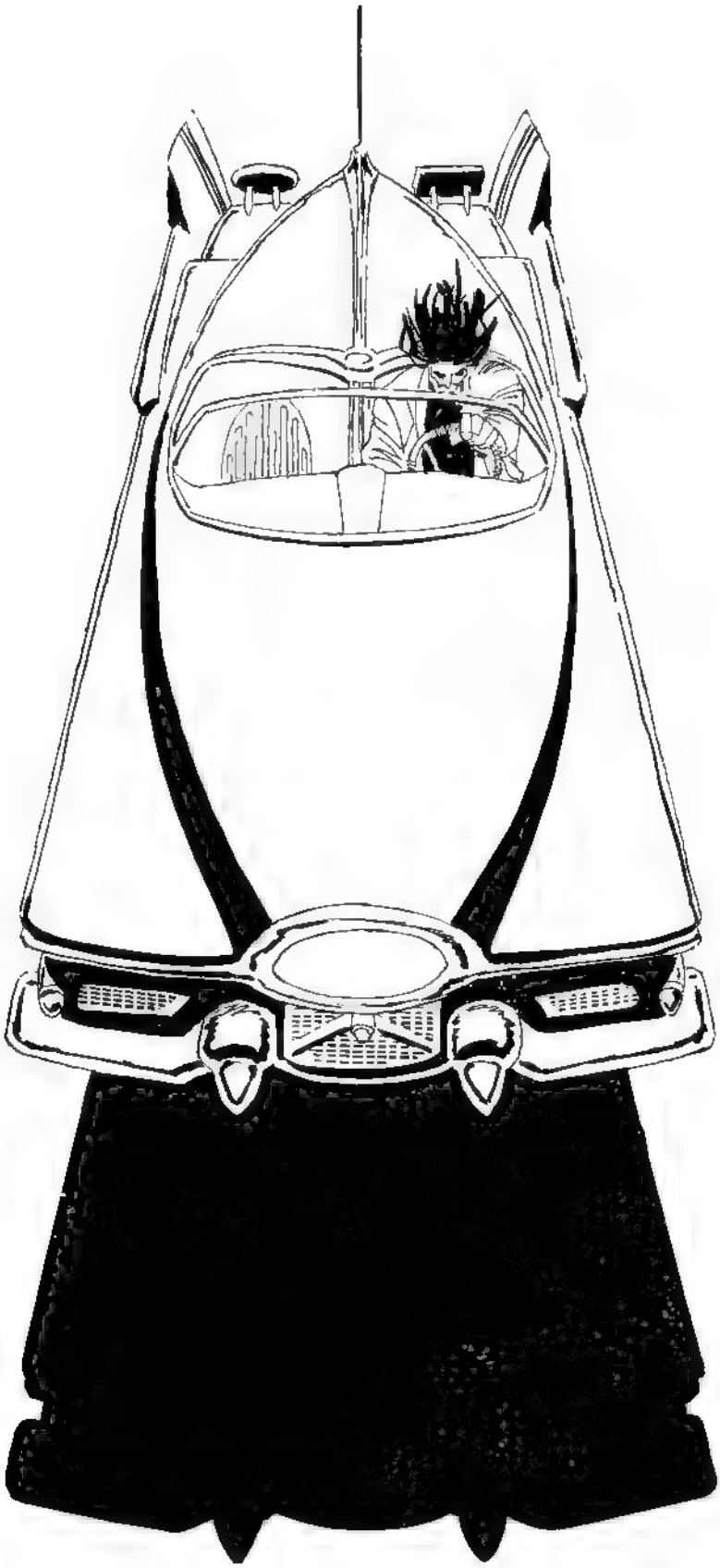
A Dame To Kill For #6, page 4, 1994



Opposite page *Family Values*, page 46, 1997

THE PLACE STINKS OF MONEY.
DADDY'S MONEY.
GLARING AT ME BEFORE I EVEN GET OUT OF MY CAR.
IT'S LIKE HE WAS EXPECTING ME
NO. I'M BEING SILLY.
HE JUST HEARD ME PULL UP
CAN I DO IT?
CAN I KILL A MAN?

"Daddy's Little Girl," page 3, *Decade: A Dark Horse Short Story Collection*, 1997



Hell and Back #3, page 26, 1999

Olympian
PALACE
IT WAS A QUIET NIGHT--
--UNTIL THE ROAR OF A RED-HOT LAMBORGHINI GOT EVERYBODY'S TEETH JIGGLING.

DAMN!
BANG.
BUT I'VE GOT NO RIGHT TO BELLYACHE. THIS LITTLE MISSION I'M ON IS THE LEAST I COULD DO.
THERE'S A KIND OF DEBT YOU CAN'T EVER PAY OFF, NOT ENTIRELY. AND THAT'S THE KIND OF DEBT I OWE GAIL.
BESIDES, I'VE GOT REASONS OF MY OWN FOR TAKING ON THIS GIG. HELL, I'D HAVE VOLUNTEERED FOR IT, IF THEY HADN'T ASKED ME FIRST.
I JUST WISH THIS DEAR OLD BEETLE COULD MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO THIRD GEAR WITHOUT SHAKING MY TEETH HALF-WAY OUT OF MY GUMS--
POKITA POK BANG
OOF!
--AND THAT IT COULD CARRY ME TWENTY YARDS WITHOUT THE CARBURETOR KICKING OUT A FAT ONE.

Opposite page: *Family Values*, page 32, 1997

Above: *Family Values*, page 5, 1997

DIZZY DAMES. WHAT WERE THEY *THINKING*, STICKING ME WITH A BEAT-UP BUCKET OF BOLTS LIKE THIS? SOMEBODY OUGHTTA TAKE IT OUT BACK AND *SHOOT* IT. IT'D BE A *MERCY*.
A FEW YEARS BEFORE I WAS *BORN*, THIS T-BIRD MUST'VE BEEN A PRETTY SWEET SET OF WHEELS. BUT IT'S BEEN AROUND A FEW TOO MANY BLOCKS A FEW TOO MANY TIMES AND WHOEVER OWNED IT OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T INDULGE IN LUXURIES LIKE THE OCCASIONAL TUNE-UP OR OIL CHANGE THE ENGINE JERKS AND FARTS LIKE AN OLD MAN ON A BAD DIET. THE STEERING MECHANISM'S GOT TERMINAL ARTHRITIS. THE SUSPENSION MAKES EVERY POTHOLE AN ADVENTURE. THE LEFT REAR TIRE IS AS SOFT AS A ROTTEN BANANA AND IF THAT'S A SLOW LEAK I'M GOOD AND SCREWED. I HAD TO CHUCK THE SPARE TO MAKE ROOM FOR ALL THE NEATLY CHOPPED BODY PARTS WE PACKED IN THE TRUNK
MAYBE FIVE BLOCKS OUT I HAPPEN TO GLANCE DOWN AT THE GAS GAUGE. WHAT I SEE GETS ME POUNDING MY FISTS AGAINST THE STEERING WHEEL LIKE SOME LUNATIC. I CURSE OUT EVERY GIRL WHO EVER WORKED OLD TOWN AND EVERY RELATIVE ANY OF THEM EVER HAD
HOW THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO MAKE IT ALL THE WAY TO THE PITS AND BACK ON LESS THAN AN EIGHTH OF A TANK?
DIZZY DAMES! DIZZY, SCARED, STUPID DAMES! YOU COULDN'T BOTHER TO FILL THE GOD DAMN GAS TANK?

The Big Fat Kill #3, page 11, 1995

"THE LADIES
ARE THE LAW HERE,
BEAUTIFUL
AND MERCILESS."

Previous page *Hell and Back* #6, back cover, 1999

Above *Sin City* trade paperback, page 57, 1993

THE RAIN'S SPUTTERED TO A STOP AND THE STREETS HAVE COME BACK TO LIFE BY THE TIME I MAKE MY WAY TO OLD TOWN.

THE MERCHANDISE IS ON DISPLAY, NEVER MIND THE COLD. PRETTY SOON EVERYTHING FROM PICKUPS TO LIMOS WILL BE PULLING IN AND BUSINESS WILL BE BOOMING.

OLD TOWN IS WHY NOBODY CALLS THIS BURG "BASIN CITY" LIKE IT SAYS ON THE MAPS

IT WAS SAINT PATRICK'S GREAT-GRANDFATHER WHO MADE IT HAPPEN. BACK THEN THIS WAS A GOLD RUSH TOWN ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING A GHOST TOWN.

THEN OLD MAN ROARK GOT HIMSELF AN IDEA.

HE SPENT EVERY SILVER DOLLAR HE HAD, IMPORTING TOP HOOKERS FROM FRANCE AND PLACES LIKE THAT.

WORD GOT OUT AND PRETTY SOON SIN CITY WAS THE HOTTEST STOP IN THE WEST. PEOPLE WOULD COME FROM MILES AROUND.

THEY STILL DO AND IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY. OLD TOWN'S KEPT ITS TRADITIONS, HANDED DOWN FROM GORGEOUS MOTHER TO GORGEOUS DAUGHTER.

FOR AN HOUR OR SO I ASK AROUND ABOUT GOLDIE. I DON'T GET ANYANSWERS BUT I KNOW I'M BOUND TO. LUCILLE SAID GOLDIE WAS A HOOKER AND IF SHE WAS SHE HAS ROOTS HERE. FRIENDS.

MAYBE EVEN FAMILY.

Sin City, episode eleven, page 11, *Dark Horse Presents* #60, 1992

SIN CITY DAMES - DON'T
NOTHING LIKE THEM
NOWHERE.

Above: *Sin City Collector Cards* #72, 1999

Opposite page: *The Big Fat Kill* limited edition hardcover, front cover, 1996

FRP
SKEEEE

GAIL GLIDES UP PAST MY SHOULDER AND TAKES ONE HARD LOOK AT THE ATOM BOMB AND LETS OUT WITH A STRING OF CURSES THAT'D KILL THE POPE.

Opposite page: *Family Values*, page 57, 1997

Above: *The Big Fat Kill* #2, page 24, 1994

Opposite page: *Hell and Back* #1, page 14, 1999

Above: *A Dame To Kill For* #2, page 5, 1994

Family Values limited edition hardcover, tip-in art, 1998

Above *Sin City Collector Cards* #70, 1999

Opposite page *Sex & Violence*, page 1, 1997

FM

Opposite page: San Diego Comic Book Expo limited edition retailer print, 1996

Above: *A Dame To Kill For* #3, page 7, 1994

Above: *The Big Fat Kill* #2, page 6, 1994

Opposite page: *The Big Fat Kill* trade paperback, page 42, 1996

A Dame To Kill For #5, page 7 1994

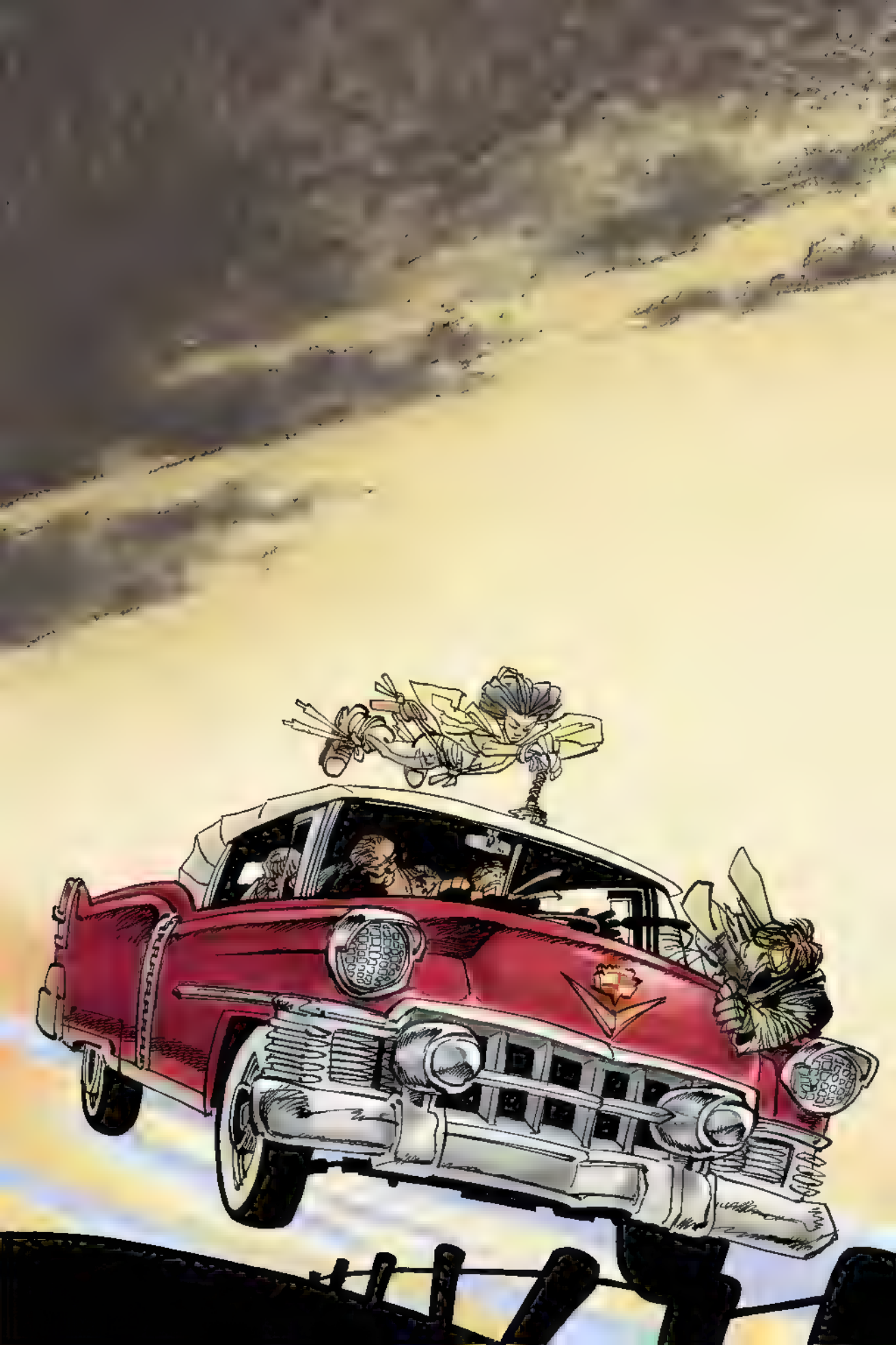
Above: *That Yellow Bastard* #4, page 27, 1996

Following page: *The Big Fat Kill* trade paperback, page 33, 1996

DAMN IT, DWIGHT. DAMN IT. YOU FOOL. YOU DAMN FOOL

"IS THIS **YOURS**?
I MEAN, DID YOU **PAINT** IT?"

COLOR BY **LYNN VARLEY**

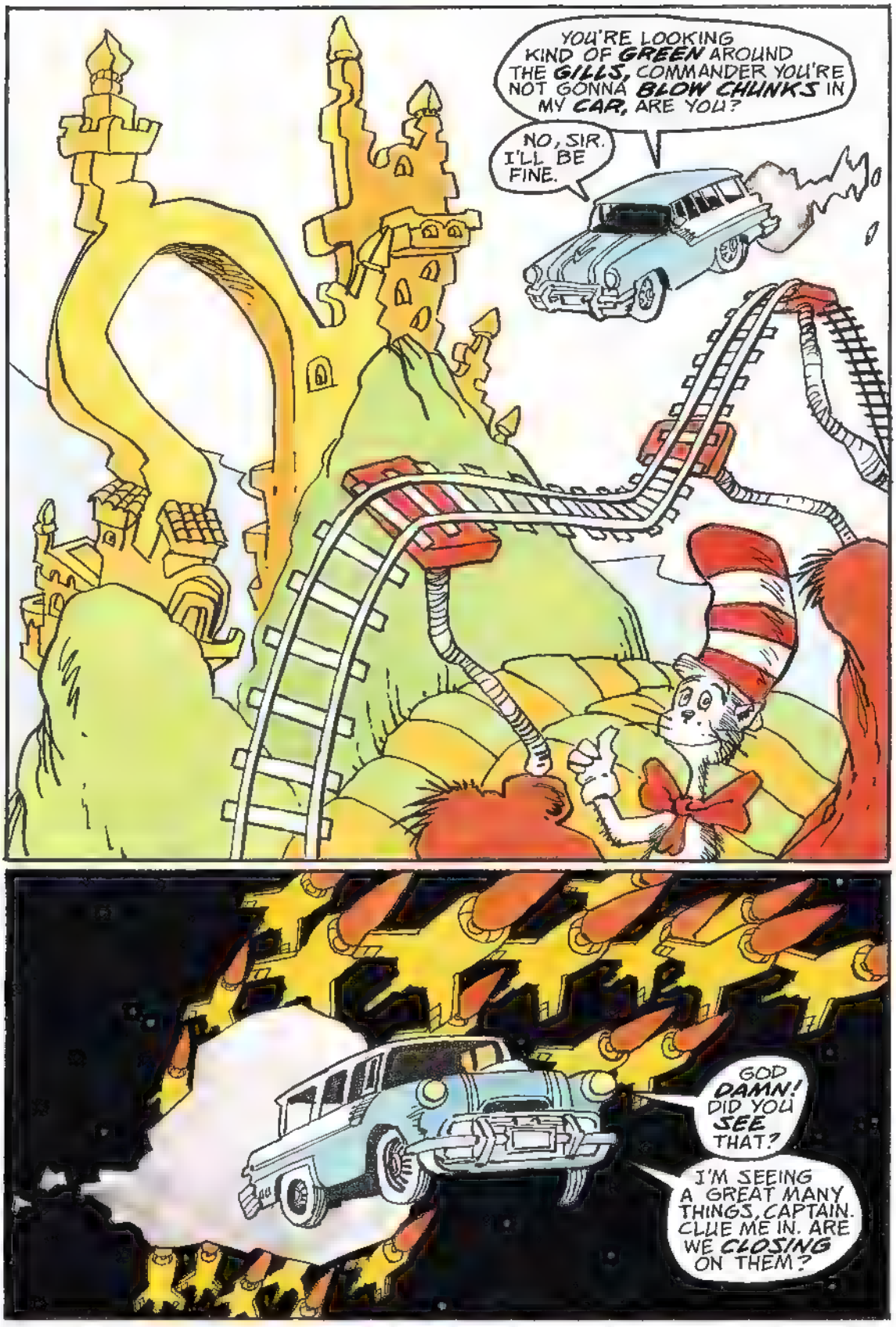


Previous page *Family Values*, front cover, 1997

Opposite page *A Dame To Kill For* trade paperback, third printing, front cover, 1997

Hell and Back #7, page 25, 2000

Opposite page: *The Big Fat Kill* trade paperback, front cover, 1996


YOU'RE LOOKING KIND OF GREEN AROUND THE GILLS, COMMANDER YOU'RE NOT GONNA BLOW CHUNKS IN MY CAR, ARE YOU?
NO, SIR. I'LL BE FINE.
GOD DAMN! DID YOU SEE THAT?
I'M SEEING A GREAT MANY THINGS, CAPTAIN. CLUE ME IN. ARE WE CLOSING ON THEM?

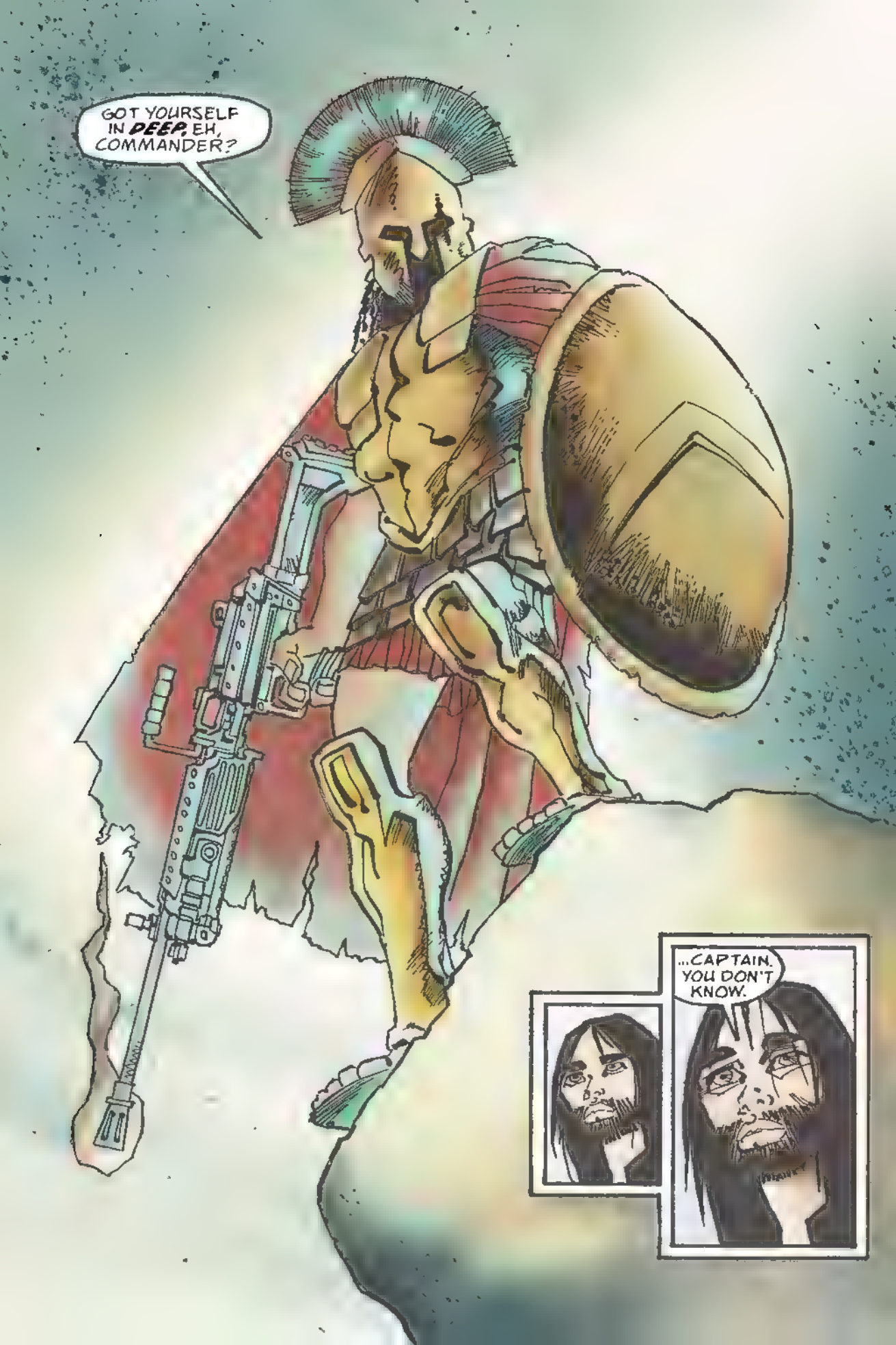
Hell and Back #7 page 20 2000

Opposite page: *Hell and Back #7*, front cover, 2000

FACE IT, BIG FELLA-- YOU'RE SCREWED.
SHUT UP!

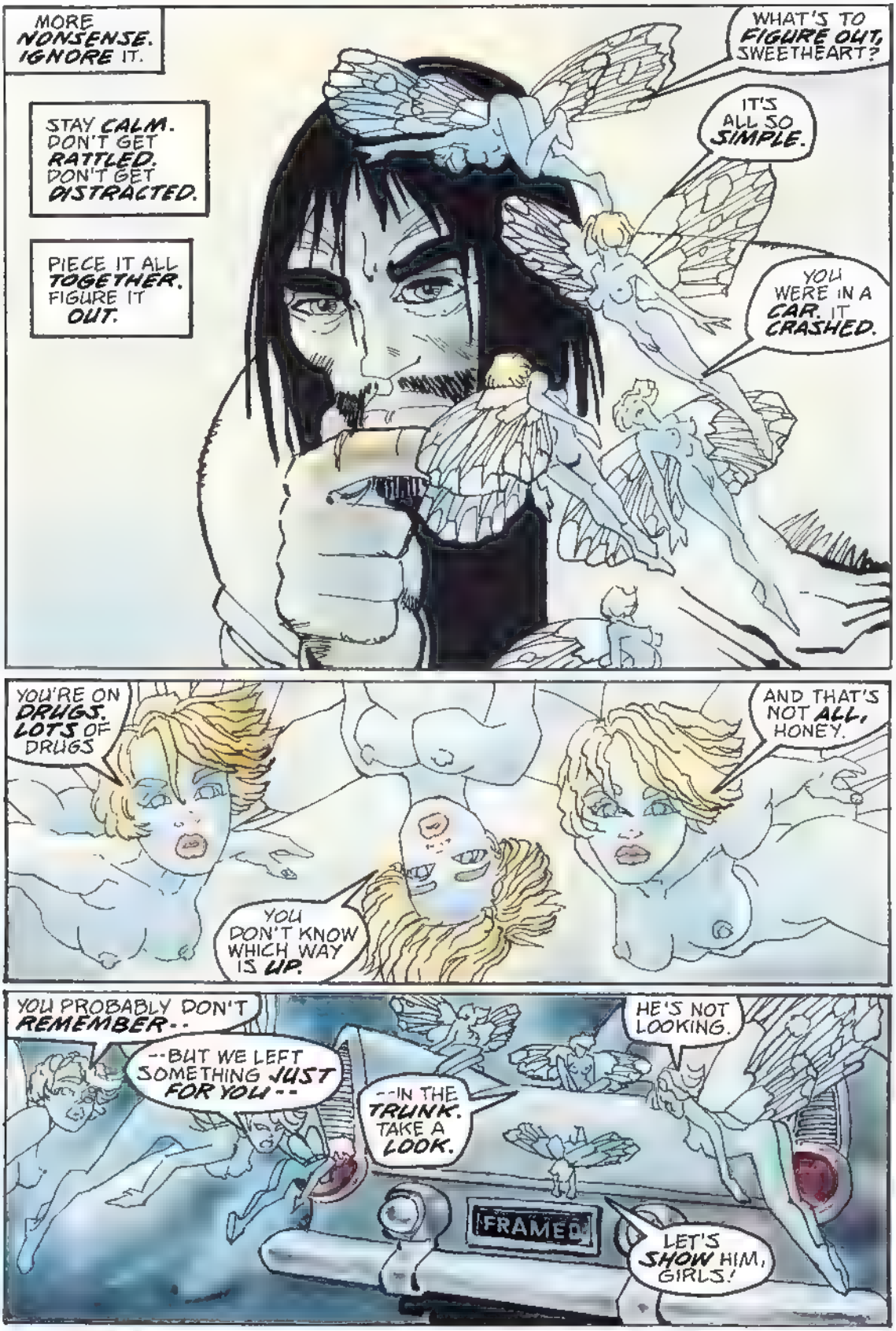
Oppos.te page. *That Yellow Bastard* #3, front cover, 1996

Opposite page: *Hell and Back* #7, page 14, 2000


GOT YOURSELF IN DEEP, EH, COMMANDER?
...CAPTAIN. YOU DON'T KNOW.

Opposite page: *Hell and Back #2*, front cover, 1999

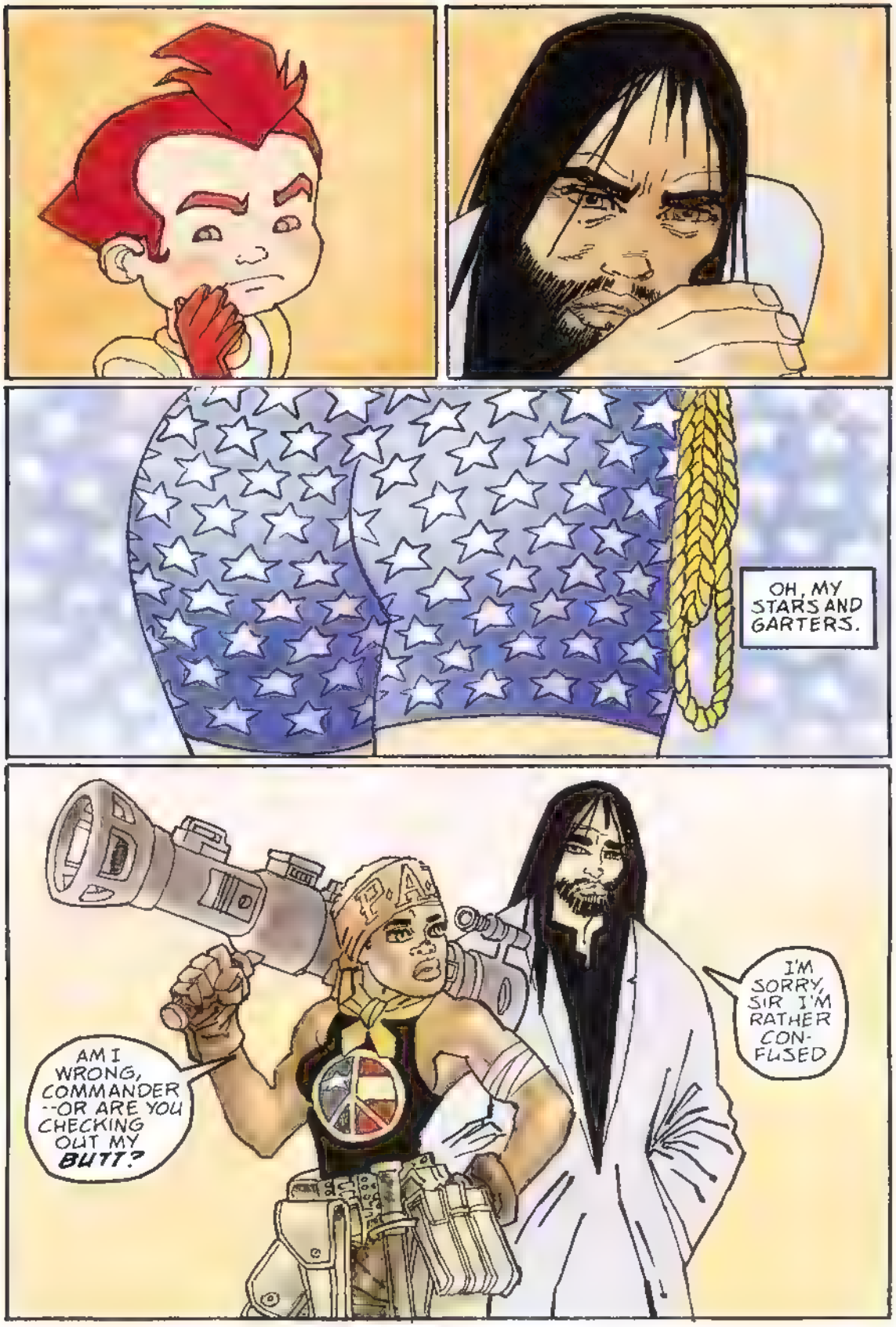
DON'T WORRY. I'M A QUALIFIED PHYSICIAN.


MORE NONSENSE. IGNORE IT.
STAY CALM. DON'T GET RATTLED. DON'T GET DISTRACTED.
PIECE IT ALL TOGETHER. FIGURE IT OUT.
WHAT'S TO FIGURE OUT, SWEETHEART?
IT'S ALL SO SIMPLE.
YOU WERE IN A CAR. IT CRASHED.
YOU'RE ON DRUGS. LOTS OF DRUGS
AND THAT'S NOT ALL, HONEY.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHICH WAY IS UP.
YOU PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER--
--BUT WE LEFT SOMETHING JUST FOR YOU--
--IN THE TRUNK. TAKE A LOOK.
HE'S NOT LOOKING.
FRAMED
LET'S SHOW HIM, GIRLS!

Hell and Back #7, page 9, 2000

Opposite page: *Hell and Back #4*, front cover, 1999

BUT, MA'AM-- I BARELY KNOW YOU.



Hell and Back #7, page 17, 2000

Opposite page: *Silent Night*, front cover, 1995

Opposite page: *Hell and Back* #7, page 6, 2000

RAAR
YAA
KRUCH
CHOMP

Opposite page: *Hell and Back* #8, front cover, 2000

PLEASE. HAVE MERCY.
THIS IS MERCY.

Opposite page: *That Yellow Bastard* trade paperback, first printing, front cover, 1997

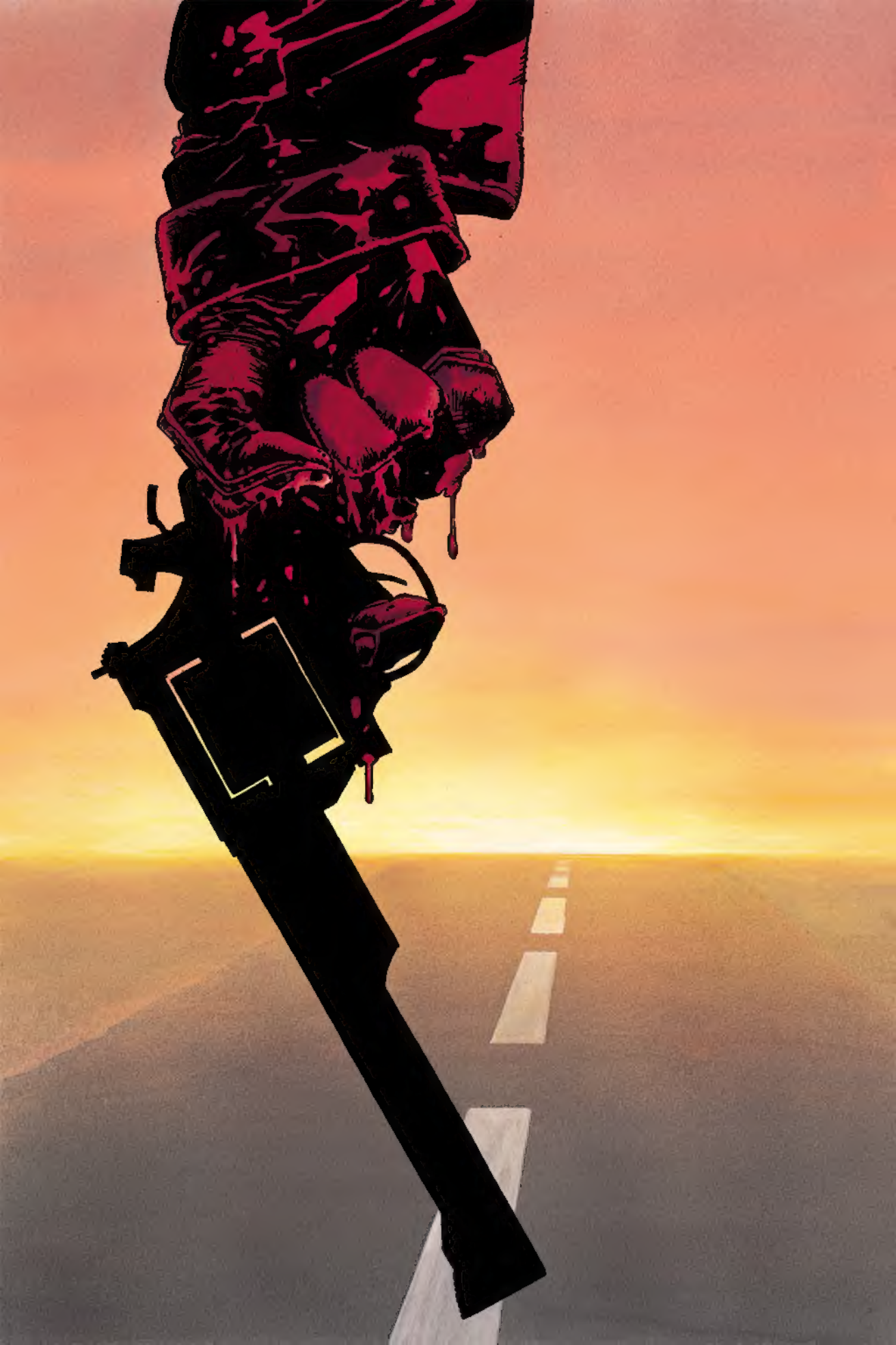


Photo © Greg Preston / sampselpreston.com

FRANK MILLER began his career in comics in the late 1970s, first drawing then writing *Daredevil* for Marvel Comics, creating what was essentially a crime comic disguised as a superhero book. It was on *Daredevil* that Miller gained notoriety, honed his storytelling abilities, and took his first steps toward becoming a giant in the comics medium.

After *Daredevil* came *Ronin*, a science-fiction samurai drama that seamlessly melded Japanese and French comics traditions into the American mainstream; and after that, the groundbreaking and acclaimed *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and *Batman: Year One*, both of which not only redefined the classic character, but also revitalized the industry itself.

Finally able to fulfill his dream of doing an all-out, straight-ahead crime series, Miller introduced *Sin City* in 1991. Readers responded enthusiastically to Miller's tough-as-leather noir drama, creating an instant sales success. His multiple award-winning *300* series from Dark Horse, a telling of history's most glorious and underreported battle, was brought to full-blooded life in 1998.

In 2001, Miller returned to the superhero genre with the best-selling *Batman: The Dark Knight Strikes Again*.

Frank Miller continues to push the medium into new territories, exploring subject matter previously untouched in comics, and his work consistently receives the highest praise from his industry peers and readers everywhere. In 2005, with the hugely successful *Sin City* movie release co-directed with Robert Rodriguez, Miller added a director's credit to his already impressive résumé and introduced his characters to an entirely new legion of fans worldwide.

"The evolution of an artist's sensibility and methods is never an entirely orderly matter. And it never ends. But some of the most recent stages in Miller's growth and development as an artist are displayed within, punctuation marks in a steadily evolving talent."

— R.C. Harvey, from his introduction

"Using stark, stylized, silhouette-heavy black-and-white art, Miller created and perfected a noir world that hadn't been seen in comics before."

— John Layman, *San Diego Union-Tribune*

"The chiaroscuro lighting, caging the characters in the jail-bar shadows of Venetian blinds, is inspired by film noir; and the explosive action and massive, granitic physicality of the characters pay tribute to Jack Kirby."

— Mark Dery, *New York Times*

"His brutal yet elegant noir renderings, pulpy yet eloquent scripting, and thoroughly uncompromising attitude make [Frank Miller] one of the most distinctive voices in comics."

— Entertainment Weekly

www.darkhorse.com